THE

AXB 202

CAPTURED SLAVE,

THE GERMAN SOCIETY OF PENNSYLVANIA
THE JOSEPH HORNER MEMORIAL LIBRARY
611 SPRING GARDEN STREET
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19123

THREE ACTS.

ARCHIVES OF
GERMAN SOCIETY,
PHILADELPHIA.

BUFFALO.

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR.

1845.

GAC
Pamphlet
AXB
200

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Mr. Brown,
" Woodroff,
" Wood
" Johnson,
" Biddle,
" Clark,
" Yates,
" Rodney,
" Toby,
" Edeman,
" Moses,
" Jonathan,
" Charley,
" Jake,
" Dick
" Mayor,
" Officer,
" Slave,
Charlotte,
Black Woman.

BROWN'S CAPTURE.

ACT I.

SCENE I. A Scene on the Levee at New-Orleans. Slaves discovered dancing, singing, playing the banjo, cock-fighting &c. &c.

ENTER MR. BROWN, 3d En. [As he enters, observes the slaves, stops, views the scene with astonishment, then walks down to the front of the stage] Well—well !—I am now twenty-five hundred miles from home—that land of freedom, where the rights of man are duly recognized, and respected. Twelve days ago I left New-York State, and the people of Buffalo, to see, and learn what —[turning to the slaves] a tale of wrong that would make the most brutalized savage upon earth shudder at its recital. I had supposed, when I left my New-York home, to visit the South, when I dissolved my social connection with an honest people, to meet the intelligence of this nation, that I was not to behold, for the gratification of foolish pride, that intelligence sacrificed to the mad passion of servile power. That people, who are the first,—when a foreign power taunts—to unfurl to the breeze the banner of liberty, that people, who profess to lay the axe at the

root of despotism, that people, who are the first in our legislatures, and in the halls of congress, to herald forth the proud declaration of freedom, to indulge a connection like that—[pointing to the slaves]—is what I little anticipated But who can account for the taste of some people. I grieve for their inconsistency. [Enter Woodruff right 3d Ent.] I fancy that I have seen that countenance before. That looks like my friend Woodruff. [Advances a little.] By my soul, that is Woodruff. Woodruff how are you?

Woodruff. Why Brown, is that you! how are you; [they shake hands,] how have you been, Brown?

Brown. I have been well. How have you been?

Wood. O, I have been well. Where do you stop, Brown?

Brown. I stop down aboard the boat, as yet. Where do you stop?

Wood. I stop at the St. Charles hotel.

Brown. Mr. Woodruff, I have been feasting my eyes upon a new scene here,—[pointing to the slaves.]—I have beheld to-day what I never in my life saw before. I have seen a people without an object to live for. I now look upon human beings made after the image of him who rules the universe, who are in a country that boasts of its freedom, robbed of all social, political, and religious rights. Woodruff, were I back upon the soil of New-York, I pledge you that you would never find me a visiter here

again. No, sir, I can never content myself in a country, where the laws of God are placed at defiance, insult offered to a nation, and the holy sabbath treated with such wanton disrespect.

Wood. Pah, pah, Brown, that is a common thing here. We think nothing of it. Come, Brown, go up to the St. Charles with me.

Brown. Have you any conveniences for writing? I want to write a letter to a young lady with whom you was once acquainted.

Wood. Ah! I see you have not forgotten the old habit. Now, Brown, you would be a little astonished if I should guess who that said young lady is, would you not?

Brown. Well, I can't say that I should.

Wood. Well, sir, it is Miss Mack.

Brown. So it is. You are right there.

Wood. Come, Brown, to the hotel with me, and write your letter, and this afternoon I will show you some rare exhibitions. These slaves will sing this afternoon, and we will give them a call. Come on, Brown.

Brown. Well, go ahead, I will follow. [Exit.

Scene II. Another view of the Levee. Enter Brown and Woodruff smoking.

Brown. Hah! hah! hah! you don't mean that, Woodruff.

Wood. Yes I do, Brown. I mean every word of it. Its all true as holy writ. Come, Brown, let us go up and inspect these fellows.

Enter Johnson and Ripple,

JOHNSON. [Discovers Brown.] I believe in my soul that is my slave with that tall fellow there. Yes, that is him, and his name is Brown. He has been absent from me six years and a half.

RIDDLE. Well, Mr. Johnson, you had better go and get an officer and secure him.

JOHN. I will. You stop here, and watch him. [Exit.

RIDDLE. [Goes up to Brown.] I see, sir, that you are quite interested in this exhibition.

BROWN. Yes, sir, this is an entire new thing to me.

RIDDLE. I conclude then, sir, that you are a stranger in these parts.

BROWN. I am but recently from New-York, sir, and but too easily persuaded that I have made a poor selection in leaving New-York, to take up my abode here.

RIDDLE. O, sir, you will be better pleased here after you have remained a time, and become a little acquainted. [Enter Johnson.

JOHN. [directing the officer to Brown] That is the man, sir.

OFFICER. [Goes up to Brown, slaps him on the shoulder.] You are my slave, sir.

BROWN. Your slave, sir ; what do you mean ? It must be that you are mistaken in the person.

OFFICER. No, sir, I am not mistaken. I apprehend you as a run away slave. The rightful property of Mr. Johnson.

JOHN. Yes, Brown, you are my slave, and

you know it. Come, there is no use in cavilling about it.

BROWN. Your slave, sir ! it is false ! I am the slave of no man. My Maker whom I cherish, made me a freeman ; and as long as he permits me to breathe, so long I shall preserve that boon, the common right of every child of nature. I charge you upon the peril of your lives to leave me, for I am no slave, neither will I be as long as I retain my senses ! I challenge evidence in favour of my being a slave. Gentlemen, if you apprehend me as a slave, I give you public warning that I shall prove a dearly bought one.

OFFICER. Tut, tut, with your nonsense, come along here. [They have a tustle, Brown is secured and chained]

WOOD. [Running away from Brown.] Is it possible that I have been so imposed upon, as to be caught associating with a slave. I shall be a little more cautious hereafter who I select as my companions. Well, it wont do for me to stay here. I must be off, or they will be nabbing me. So good bye, Mr. Brown.

BROWN. I have travelled through many of these United States, I have associated with people of all nations, and I have to inform you, that I never have been apprehended for any offence. I wish you to fully understand before you lodge me within the gloomy walls of a prison, that you are tampering with the best interests of your souls, offering violence to the laws of your coun-

try, and violating the very first pledge of faith between you and your God.

JOHN. Come, officer, take him to the calaboose. Dont wait to hear him expound slavery.

OFFICER. Come along. Brown.

[Exit Officer, Brown, Riddle, and Johnson, after which a song by the slaves. Discharge of cannon, slaves scramble in every direction, and the curtain falls.]

ACT II.

SCENE I.—Toby discovered before the door of the jail.

Enter Officers with Brown.

OFFICER. Good evening, Toby, here is a fellow that we want to put under your care. Where is the Jailer, Toby.

TOBY. I cannot tell you, gentlemen.

OFFICER. Well, take care of this fellow. Look to him well.

TOBY. [Takes hold of Brown.] Come on sir. [Supposing Brown to be a white man, puts him in with the white prisoners.]

Enter Mr. Coleman the Jailor.

OFFICER. Ah, good evening, Mr. Coleman, how do you do, this evening.

COLEMAN. Well, sir, what do you find new under the sun?

OFFICER. Nothing more, than we have just brought you another customer.

COLE. And pray who may he be?

OFFICER. He is the slave of Mr. George Johnson. Ran away from him some six years ago. He is a hard head, and it will be necessary to keep an eye on him.

COLE. Truly—is he chained?

OFFICER. Oh, yes, we had to fasten him to bring him here.

COLE. What is his name?

OFFICER His name is Brown I believe.

COLE. If he has enjoyed his liberty six years he must be more than ordinary. I think I will take a look at the fellow. [Opens the door where the slaves are, goes in with the officers. Returns to the door, and calls Toby, who was seated a pace or two from the door.] Toby, [Toby nods half asleep.] Toby, Toby, I say, [Toby starts up.]

TOBY. Did you call me, massa!

COLE. Yes, where is that slave these men just brought in.

TOBY. Slave! what slave! I have'nt seen him. massa.

COLE. You have'nt seen him. Did not Mack and Bursh just deliver a man over to you?

TOBY. Oh, yes, yes. But that was a white man. I stuck him in with the white prisoners.

OFFICER. [Coming out from the prison.] Well, Mr. Coleman, I cant find him. He has given us the slip some way, I guess.

COLE. Is he a white man?

OFFICER. No he is not white—but rather light coloured, for a negro.

COLE. Old Toby here, has made a mistake, I expect. He took him for a white man, and has lodged him among the white prisoners. Toby, go and fetch that fellow out here. [Toby goes in after Brown, and when bringing him out of the door, Coleman says] Well, I dont wonder old Toby made the mistake, for by my soul, I believe the fellow is white. [Toby brings Brown forward.] Well, sir, who are you.

BROWN. I am a man, and an American citizen. Neither deserving of this place, nor the cattle that I am associated with.

COLE. Your language but poorly comports with your condition. What claims have you upon the title of American citizen.

BROWN. The same claim that every man, woman, and child has, who are born under the American sun.

COLE. We have many men who were born among us who do not pretend to claim their liberty. They know full well that they have no right to it.

BROWN. Laying that aside, although I do not concede the point, I was born of parents who were free.

COLE. What do you mean, by standing up before me, and lying in that way?

BROWN. I have spoken the truth, sir. I am not afraid to speak the truth even to your highness, although I know that it generally irritates.

COLE. You are Johnson's slave. Yo. name is Brown.

BROWN. My name is Brown, but I am the slave of no man. I was born as free to enjoy my liberty as I was to breathe the atmosphere.

COLE. Well, I think that you may enjoy the atmosphere of this jail awhile. Take him in, Toby. [Toby puts Brown in the cell.] That fellow don't look much like a slave.

OFFICER. He is rather light, but I think he belongs to Johnson.

COLE. Toby, I imagine that you eyes must be rather poor, that you can't distinguish one of your own race.

TOBY. Ah, massa, dat fellow dose'nt look much like me. He is a pretty good white man, dat fellow.

OFFICER. Mr. Coleman, we have done our business, I think we will be off. Good day.

COLE. Good day, gentlemen. Toby, I want you to give that fellow that came in yesterday, twenty-five lashes, and the fellow that stole the hundred dollar bill, fifteen—and if you like, you may tickle that fellow Brown a little. [Exit.

TOBY. I will, massa. [Slave flogged by Toby. A fellow whipped upon the ladder for stealing a hundred dollars.] Mr. Brown, you had better take care of yourself, or you will catch it.

BROWN. The man that puts me on that ladder, and whips me, dies—or I do, one of the two.

[Enter Officer to get Brown and take him before the Mayor.]

OFFICER. Toby, we want that fellow Brown.

TOBY. Yes, sir, I will bring him out. [Toby brings Brown out.]

OFFICER. Mr. Brown, we want you to go before the Mayor

BROWN. Any where, gentlemen, to get out of this filthy place. Why, if I should stay there over night, the vermin would carry me off, body, baggage, and all.

OFFICER. I expect they are rather severe on a stranger, Brown.

BROWN. You are right—they are. I fancy northern meat is somwhat of a luxury to them.

OFFICER. Well, Brown, we will leave them, and give the Mayor a call. [Exit.

SCENE II. Mayor's Court discovered. Enter Johnson, Riddle, and Jackson, and seat themselves. Enter Brown between two Officers, who seat themselves.

MAYOR. Mr. Johnson, are you ready for trial ?

JOHN. [rises.] I am, sir.

MAYOR. Are your witnesses here, Mr. Johnson ?

JOHN. They are, sir.

MAYOR. Who is the man you claim as your slave ?

JOHN. His name is Brown, sir.

MAYOR. Where is he ?

JOHN. There he sits, sir, between those two officers. [Brown rises.]

MAYOR. That man a slave ? you astonish me ! Can it be, that so light, and fair a young man is a slave ! Brown, are you ready for trial ?

BROWN. No, your honour. I was last evening surprised while on the Levee, by these land pirates, dragged through the streets of your city like a felon, and thrown into prison among the vilest of the human species, covered with filth and vermin, by whom I was well nigh robbed of the last drop of blood that my body contained. And had it not been for your kindness in summoning me before you at this early hour, I doubt whether my life would have been spared. Your officers have taken me from the dungeon, and brought me here. I have been allowed no opportunity to procure witnesses. I am a stranger in a strange land, without counsel.

MAYOR. Mr. Brown, I sympathize in your misfortune, and I could wish that the discharge of my duties did not call me to undertake this very unpleasant task. But, I am placed here by the people of this city to transact their business. I am neither more nor less than an agent in their employ. It would be a violation of my covenant, a breach of my faith, did I refuse to hold you to trial, and I regret exceedingly, that I am compelled to bring you in subordination to the black code. Mr, Johnson, where are your witnesses ?

JOHN. There they are, sir. Mr. Riddle and Mr. Jackson.

MAYOR. Mr. Riddle and Mr. Jackson, step forward, and be sworn.

CLERK. [Holds out the Testament.] You, and each of you, do solemnly affirm that the evidence you shall give in the case now pending, wherein George Johnson, Plaintiff, claims that David Paul Brown, Defendant, is his slave, shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. [They kiss the book.]

MAYOR. Mr. Riddle, you will be so good as to relate what you know in relation to this matter.

RIDDLE. I can say that I knew Mr Brown six years and a half ago, when he was the servant and slave of Mr. Johnson. I have not seen him for six years and a half, until I met him last evening upon the Levee. I believe him to be the same man.

MAYOR. How do you recognize him, Mr. Riddle. Is there any mark about him, by which you can be certain that he is the same man ?

RIDDLE. Nothing farther, than the general expression of the countenance,

MAYOR. That is all, Mr. Riddle. Mr. Jackson do you know this man, Mr. Brown ?

JACK. Yes, sir, I know him.

MAYOR. Well, go on and state what you know about this matter.

JACK. I know that this man Brown, six years and a half since, was the slave of Mr. Johnson.

He ran away about that time, which caused some talk, and considerable search. I have never seen him from that time to this, until I entered this court room. I am confident he is the same man.

MAYOR. That will do, Mr. Jackson. [Jackson takes his seat.]

BROWN. Your honour, I am convinced from the course that this trial is taking, that I cannot have justice, but that a sentence will be passed upon me. Before that takes place, I would be thankful if this court would allow me to make a few remarks.

MAYOR. That is your privilege, Mr. Brown.

BROWN. I arrived in this city yesterday morning, direct from the State of New-York, that land which has proved an asylum for the oppressed. When I left that free and healthy atmosphere, I was a freeman. Could I have anticipated, while gratifying a wish to observe the peculiarities incident to the land of my birth, that the sacred constitution of my country which pledged as my right, this privilege, and led me to expect it, was to be violated, and I made the victim of oppression. In my travels I conclude that I will visit New-Orleans ; before I am fairly out of sight of the conveyance that brought me a freeman to your shores, I am waylaid by these savages, and thrown into a dirty, loathsome prison. My mother was born in England, as free as the waters of yon proud river. My father was born in Spain, as free

as the air that you breathe. I was born in America, that land that professes to afford protection to each and every one. But, is my liberty respected ?—No ! I am robbed of all rights, I am made the slave of one who neither respects himself, his country, nor his God, and my happiness is at once, and for ever destroyed. If you, by your sentence, make me the slave of that man, do not shudder if the spectred spirits of the illustrious patriots of '76 should haunt you in your moments of repose. I again assert that I am no slave. I was born a freeman, and by the God who made me I will die a freeman. Your honour, I have done.

Mayor. Prisoner, it is unusual for me, in the examination, and disposal of the cases that bare affinity to this, to devote much time in making remarks ; but, sir, I am pleased to inform you that your condition excites within me no little sympathy. In the discharge of the duties of my station, I have often had occasion to try the issues between master and slave—to say that I have examined an hundred such cases, would not, I think, be transcending the limits of propriety ; but never have I in my life, been so strongly impressed with the belief, that I was jeopardizing the life, liberty, and happiness of a fellow-creature, and committing an act of wilful injustice, as in the case now before me ; wherein I am judge, about to pass sentence, and you the criminal, about to enter upon a new existence, and bid farewell to every object that can

render your stay upon earth gratifying to yourself and friends. Your liberty, the free gift of your God, is about to be taken from you, to meet the demands of this country's black code. If you have friends, they are called upon to mourn the loss of one no doubt they dearly cherish. All your plans for future action, if any you have, are at once destroyed. Your habits of former life, and the tender associations that you have contracted, and for years sought to preserve with the utmost tenacity with the great family of the world, you must now bid adieu to. It is a severe pang to me, I assure you, that I am called upon to pass a sentence that must render you hereafter a blank in society ; but the evidence in this case, Mr. Brown, is so positive, that I cannot avoid the unpleasant alternative, that compels me to pronounce you the property of Mr. George Johnson. Mr. Brown, you are his slave.

Brown. This court makes me such by the foul perjury of two men who should have rested under its curse before their birth, — but, thank the stars, it is without the sanction of justice. God and my country will ere long rescue me from the clutches of the hungry wolves that prey for my life.

Mayor. [Hands Johnson a certificate, leaves his stand, goes to Brown, shakes hands with him, and says] Brown, be steady, respect yourself and condition, and I will make some effort to restore your liberty. So, fare you well.

BROWN. I shall ever respect myself, but never my slavery. I thank you for your kindness. Good bye, sir. [Officers take Brown off. Exit Johnson, Riddle and Jackson.]

MAYOR. That man, I believe is wronged. He is no slave. I will in pursuit of justice, and have him freed. [Exit, curtain falls.]

ACT III.

SCENE I.—Inside of a Prison. Slaves discovered.

SLAVE. Here, Brown, here's your dinner. [Hands him some boiled corn on a barrel head, and two mouthfuls of bull's beef.]

BROWN. Is this my dinner, [takes the dish,] have'nt you got some old beef bones to put with it. [Brown throws the dinner away.] You don't catch me eating any such dinner as that. Why, I would as soon make a meal off of you, as to eat that stuff. When I can't get better living than that, I will lie here in jail and suck my fingers.

SLAVE. Well, I think you will have to commence sucking before long, and suck a long time too.

BROWN. Come, come, go away from me, don't stand here parleying about your old beef head, and soaked corn ; go and pick up your provisions, and be off, or I will put you in a condition to receive an official call from the coroner.

SLAVE. [Goes and picks up the dinner.] Old fellow, you will be glad to get this to-morrow. [Exit.

BROWN. [Speaks to Philip.] Is this the way a free born American citizen is treated ?

PHIL. This is the way slaves are treated.

BROWN. But I am a freeman.

PHIL. Yes, but you are among slaves. They show no distinction here, although you have the advantage of being a white man.

BROWN. Well, my man, I sha'n't be a slave long. With me its either death or liberty. If the slaves in this prison would rise in the majesty of their power, and obey the calls of freedom and justice, the time they would be stigmatized with the loathsome, and vulgar name of slave, would be short. You are not slaves, you are freemen ! God made you as free as any man that walks the soil. When you reflect that you bare the name of slave, you should also keep in mind that it is a usurpation of right, protected by the supremacy of power. Your enemies have the power, and they use it in wicked violation of the constitution of their country, in violation of every principle of justice, and in contempt of the Being who made them, and gave them their liberty.

JONATHAN. My dear man, did we make an effort for ourselves, they would whip us to death. Why, sir, they tie men upon a ladder here, and whip them till their backs are raw,

and fill up the gashes with ashes. Yes, sir, some times they whip them to death.

Brown. The more shame for you, that are living. When you see your brothers treated in that way, why do you not strike the keeper dead, and make him the victim of his own evil acts! He is a traitor to his God, a violator of the peace, and his degenerate soul should be made to quail under the ire of an abused, disgraced, and helpless people. If you lie there upon your backs, and allow the vermin to travel over you, and make a provision house of your body, robbing you of the very nutriment of life, that gives energy to your soul and spirit, I am not surprised that you should swallow down with so much apparent satisfaction, the bitter and venomed pill of slavery. Rise up, like men, and claim a right that the world recognizes. If you never make an effort, you certainly can never expect to be free, because you would not be prepared to appreciate that freedom.

Jona. Well, now, Mr. Brown, if there is any chance to escape this loathsome retreat, even should it be at the instigating of evil, I, for one, am ready to enter heart and hand in the cause.

Brown, John, you have received the greatest injury of any in this jail. You have been whipped with a handsaw, and your poor back shows now too plainly, the marks of that brutal outrage. Let a recital of that injury inspire you

to strike a blow for yourself and friends. John, when the keeper enters this morning, you take that old shovel, and straighten it over his head. Down him, and then give us the benefit of the knees. Will you do it?

Jona. Yes, Brown, I will. If I get catched at it, they can but kill me; and I might as well have an easy, and a sudden death, as to be tortured here for months, without the slightest prospect of relief,

Brown. Well, John, I shall depend upon your doing it.

Jona. I will do it. [A rap on the door of the jail. Enter Yates with his friend.]

Yates. I want to look at a slave owned by Mr. Johnson.

Jailor. [Points to Brown.] That is him, sir.

Yates. How long have you been a slave, fellow?

Brown. A slave to whom?

Yates. Slave to whom? Why a slave to my friend Johnson.

Brown. I am a slave to nothing but good living. I am the slave of no man upon earth.

Yates. Where did you come from when you came here?

Brown. I came from New-York; the land where honest men live.

Yates. I suppose, then, you have been in Canada?

Brown. I have, sir.

YATES. [Speaking to his friend.] That fellow is equally as white as I am. [Speaking to Brown] You are too white for me, I don't want you. Come, Jailor, there is no speculation for us here, we will be off. [Exit.

BROWN. Philip, I don't appear to please that gentleman.

PHIL. No, Brown, they think that you are too independent.

BROWN. I hope they may all think so. Philip, how long have you been a slave?

PHIL. From my birth, Brown.

BROWN. What was you put in here for, Philip?

PHIL. Listen a moment, Brown, and I will tell you. Some three years since, my master said to me, Philip, how would you like to work for yourself? O, says I, very well. Well, says he, I can buy an old horse and dray, for twenty-five dollars. I think I will do it, and let you try your luck at financeering Let us see how well you can do for the next three months. The old fellow bought me the said horse and dray, and at it I went, to try my skill in the art of money-making. At the expiration of the three months, I had paid my master eighty-eight dollars in cash, and traded off my old horse and dray for a good horse, and comparatively new dray. My master was much pleased with my success, told me to go ahead, and do the best that I could. I did so, and when three months more had passed, my master was still

better satisfied with my report, than before. In this way I conducted my little business, adding a little every three months to the annuity that fell to my master; and converting the balance of profits, resulting from my business, into the purchase of drays, until a few days since, when I had succeeded in establishing twelve drays, which afforded a very handsome income. On the day that I was thrown into this place, my master took offence at something, accused me of purloining the money, and useing it for my own benefit, took from me all my property, and told me that I could stay here the rest of my days

BROWN. Well, Philip, your case is almost as hard as mine. [Rap on the jail door. Enter Philip's wife with his dinner.]

CHARLOTTE. My dear, I have brought you some toast, some coffee, and some pudding, does that please you?

PHIL. O, yes, my dear, I am always satisfied with whatever comes from your hand.

CHAR. Have these ugly fellows whipped you to-day, Philip.

PHIL. No, dearest, they have let me pass to-day. Come, Brown, my friend, you must share with me this dinner.

BROWN. I will, Philip, without much urging for I am almost starved out. [They eat] This is capital pudding.

PHIL. My wife is no ordinary cook, Mr. Brown.

BROWN. I see she is not. I hope she will make her visits frequent, if you and I have got to stop here, Philip.

PHIL. She comes twice a day, Brown.

BROWN. Good, I am glad to hear that.

CHAR. What shall I bring this evening, Philip.

PAIL. Any thing you think best for an inhabitant of this place.

CHAR. I will bring you a little meat to-night.

PHIL. Very well.

CHAR. [Going.] Good morning, Philip.

PHIL. Good morning.

CHAR. Good morning, Mr. Brown. [Exit.

BROWN. Good morning, good morning. I shall ever remember you with a grateful heart. *Philip, how soothing it is to the afflicted mind of a prisoner to witness the affection, and hear the gentle voice of an honest woman.*

PHIL. Yes, Brown, the little attentions of my wife, is the only consolation I have.

BROWN. I should think she would find trouble in getting away.

PHIL. O, my dear sir, she is a free woman.

BROWN. The deuce she is, that accounts for it, then. [Rap on the jail door. Enter old Rodney.]

ROD. I came in here to look at Mr. Johnson's slave. I don't know but I shall buy him.

JAILOR. That is the fellow that sits in that

corner. Get up, here, Brown, and show yourself.

BROWN. [Gets up and shakes himself] I'll shake off a few of these monsters, so that the old fellow can get a fair view of me. [Walks towards Rodney.] I am the man, sir, they say belongs to Johnson.

ROD. Ah! ah! if you suit me, I would like to buy you to drive a bread cart. Do you think you could do that business?

BROWN. I drives no bread carts for you or any other man.

ROD. You, you, you say you drives no bread carts for any man, did you?

BROWN. Yes, that is just what I said. You put me on a bread cart, and I'll drive it into the Mississippi for you, and throw you in after it, you old dog, you.

ROD. Ah! ah! I don't want you, I don't want you. Mr. Jailor, I will be going—I don't want no such man as that. He is too insolent for me.

BROWN. Be off, and don't you come back here again, you old shoat, if you do we will make a free mason out of you.

JAILOR. He is a hard customer, Mr. Rodney.

ROD. Yes, yes, he is a bad nigger, I don't want him. Come, let me out, Mr Jailor. [Exit.

JAILOR Go ahead, you old bloat. Brown, what did you abuse the old man in that way, for?

BROWN. Would you ask a gentleman to observe courteous language towards such an old Turk as he is.

JAILOR. Certainly, treat every man well that treats you well.

BROWN. Do you call it treating a man well, to make common traffic of his body! Respect due to such men! no—they are not entitled even to a name among their kind. God deliver me from such men.

JAILOR. Well, come men, get into your cells, I want to shut up.

[The men go into their cells, and the scene closes]

SCENE II.—An Auction stand.—Enter an Auctioneer and six or eight white men, with a dozen negroes.

AUCT. Well, gentlemen, which of these fellows shall I sell first? Come, stir around here, I am in a hurry.

MOSES. Here, sir, sell this fellow. [Slave gets upon the stand.]

AUCT. Well, gentlemen, what shall I have for this slave? Give me a bid. He is a fine, young, handsome, respectable negro. His skull is a half a foot thick. His joints are tight. His heels well prepared for the course, and he has a rich complexion. Come, give us a bid. What shall I have for this chap.

1ST. SPEC. Two hundred and fifty dollars.

AUCT. Two hundred and fifty dollars is offered for this large, double-headed, double-jointed, double-fisted negro—shall I have any more?

2D. SPEC. Four hundred dollars.

AUCT. Four hundred dollars is offered. Crack away, men, crack away.

3D. SPEC. Five hundred dollars.

4TH. SPEC. Six hundred dollars.

AUCT. Six hundred Dollars is offered, shall I have any more? Quick, or he is gone—once, twice— last call—will you see that fine fellow go for six hundred dollars? Last chance, men, going, going—last chance—gone. [Enter officers with Brown and other slaves, men, women, and children.]

AUCT. Bring along your next slave. [slave takes the stand.] What shall I have for this young slave? Give me something for him.

1ST. SPEC. Two hundred dollars.

AUCT. Two hundred dollars is offered for this fellow.

2D. SPEC. Three hundred dollars.

AUCT. Three hundred dollars. Come, don't drag along in this way. Give me another bid.

AN OLD BLACK WOMAN. Massa, don't buy that boy, he is mine.

GIRL. Massa, if you buy him, buy me, he is my brother.

2D. SPEC. Get away from me. Don't pester me in this way.

AUCT. Come, this fellow must be sold, what shall I have for him, give me a bid.

3D. SPEC. Three hundred and fifty dollars.

AUCT. Three hundred and fifty dollars I am offered. Shall I have any more? Once, twice, three times, and gone. Who comes next?

OFFICER. Here, sell this man next.

AUCT. Bring him along here, on to this stand. What is his name?

OFFICER. Brown.

AUCT. Brownage, bordering on the white order. Well, what shall I have for him?

BROWN. You just keep that chatter box of yours still for a moment. I want to speak to these gentlemen.

AUCT. Well, it looks to me as though you were a pretty important darkey.

BROWN. I am just as good, and just as white a man as you are.

AUCT. Come, come, go on if you want to talk, I am in a hurry.

BROWN. Gentlemen, you are here I suppose, for the purpose of advancing your interests. When you buy a slave, you buy with a reference to but one thing—gain. As you are about to bid upon me, I feel as though it was my duty to inform you that you will make but little money in the purchase of my person. I am a free born American citizen. The holy alliance of liberty is pledged to my support. Upon this auction stand is a man, who claims the guarantee of our constitution, his country's pride. And upon this stand I place before you the glorious pledge of my country's faith. Deface but one sentiment of its holy record, and may your consciences suffer the awful wreck of prodigal despair, and the curse of an injured heaven ever rest upon you. I was born of free parents, came to this city without a fear of interruption, had but just landed upon your shore, when I was waylaid, thrown into a dungeon, from thence I was taken before your Mayor, and by false swearing, was made the slave of a citizen by the name of Johnson. I was taken back to jail, kept there a few days, then brought out, and set up here as an article of trade, to be sold. I am a freeman—shall ever be a freeman—so I warn you against purchasing me.

AUCT. Well, my fine fellow, if you have got through, I will dispose of you. What shall I have for this man who says he is free. Give me a bid for him. What will you give for this free, white, coloured slave. What shall I have for him. Will no one bid on him. Are you all frightened. Well, take him away. [Brown is taken away to jail. Another negro is placed upon the stand.] What shall I have for this fellow, then?

1ST. SPEC. I will give you five hundred dollars for that fellow.

AUCT. Five hundred dollars is offered for this fine, fat, double-headed negro. [His mother and sisters weep for his condition.] Come, gentlemen, bid—don't be parleying there with those women. Give us another bid. Five hundred dollars once, five hundred dollars twice, five hundred dollars three times,—and gone. Gen-

tlemen, this auction is closed until Wednesday morning at ten oclock. [Scene closes.]

SCENE III.—The Prison.

PHIL. John, I feel sorry for that young fellow Brown, I do not believe that he is a slave.

JONA. Neither do I, but they have got him fast now, and you might as well attempt to make the devil let go of you when he gets hold, as one of these slave-holders They will squeeze you so tight, that you can't squeal.

PHIL. Yes, John, they don't show much mercy when they get a fellow into their power. It cannot be that that noble sentiment contained in the revealed will of God—" do unto your neighbour as you would that he should do unto you," ever enters their minds. For if it did, it seems to me that their consciences would receive a paraletic stroke, that would prostrate them at the altar of forgiveness, and lead them to respect the demands of common justice.

JONA. Nonsense, Philip, what do they care about scripture, forgiveness, or justice, They have outlived it. They have travelled on the rail-road of crime so fast, that justice on its democratic horse-back way of travelling, has entirely lost sight of them. O, no, we must never hope for mercy at their hands, because if we do, we should be just as much disappointed, as though we should look for rice pudding and buttered cakes in the place of boiled corn. [Rap on the jail door. Enter officers with Brown.]

JAILOR. Why did you not sell this fellow?

OFFICER. O, he had rather lie in jail, than to take the healthy air.

BROWN. You are right, I had.

OFFICER. I should keep an eye on that fellow, for he is a pretty hard customer. [Exit.

JAILOR. Ah, never mind, I will take care of him.

PHILIP. Brown, I hardly expected to see you back here again. I supposed they would dispose of you at some price.

BROWN. No, they dare not do it. Philip, when they put me upon the stand for sale, I stood up boldly before them, and told them the consequences that would follow a purchase of my person. I informed them that I was no slave, nor never would I be, so long as I had strength to work my escape. As I anticipated, they refused to hazard their money. Not a bidder was there to be found. With angry scowl the auctioneer said, take this fellow away. Philip, I am determined that they shall not make a big speck out of me.

PHILIP. Be careful what you do. They are bad men to oppose. [Rap on the jail door. Enter Philip's wife.]

CHARLOTTE. Philip, I had some friends call upon me, and I could not get here quite as soon as I usually do. But to make it up, I have taken more pains than usual in arranging your meal.

PHILIP. You are very kind, Charlotte.

Come, Brown, lend a hand here, to dispose of this dinner.

Brown. Ah, I will do that, for I feel as though I was on the wheels of starvation, and that they were going mighty fast too. Charlotte, I am not in the habit of flattering my friends, but you certainly get up a remarkably pleasant dish. [Jailor commences whipping a fellow.]

Slave. Oh! massa, I never will do so again.

Jailor. You won't—aye, no I don't mean you shall. [Puts the lash on him.]

Slave. Oh! lord help me! Oh! Oh, lord! Oh! do stop. You will kill me. Oh, dear!

Brown [speaks to Philip.] Well, that is a shame. I would not be guilty of beating a dog in that way.

Jailor [overhears him.] What do you say, sir? Give me any more words, and I will put you on the ladder, and we will see how you like it.

Brown. The man that puts me on that ladder, and beats me in that way, dies, if powder and ball will kill him.

Jailor. Have you got a weapon about you?

Brown. No, sir, I do not expect to kill you while I remain a prisoner here. But when I get out, which will be ere long, then I caution you to go veiled.

Jailor. O, nonsense, you are not half so dangerous a man as you try to make out.

Brown. No, I am not dangerous when you treat me well. [Rap on the jail door. Enter Woodfork.]

Wood. I wish to look at that fellow Brown, who is the slave of Johnson.

Jailor. Stand up here, men, here is a gentlemen that wishes to look at you. [They all get into a line.]

Wood. I know the man that I wish to see, but upon my word I cannot pick him out here.

Jailor. Who was it that you said you wished to see?

Wood. The slave of Mr. Johnson.

Brown. I suppose I am the man that you are looking for.

Wood. Well, really, Brown, you have grown so wolfish about the head and shoulders, and withal, so ragged, that I did not know you. Come, come, Brown, own your master, and escape this filthy hole.

Brown. Own my master! I cannot but think that you are disposed to trifle with my good sense. I acknowledge a servant's allegiance to no monarch, but my Maker. When he commands, I obey. But to no such sickly exhibition of humanity, do I offer myself a sacrifice. My sire crowned me at my birth a freeman. My country sanctioned the act. And since I have arrived at the years of discretion, I have offered in holy pledge, my vows to the goddess of liberty! I have been formally baptized, and admitted into the church of my re-

publican fathers ; and shall I now, at this late day do violence to my faith, and acknowledge the shadow of what should compose a man ! my Saviour—God forbid. [Rap on the jail door. Enter Johnson.]

Wood. Mr. Johnson, I have been striving to persuade your servant Brown, here, to acknowledge you as his master, and leave this filthy and unwholesome place.

John. Well, what does he think about it ?

Wood. O, he appears to think he will try it awhile longer. He has not got quite enough of it yet.

John. Come, come, Brown, don't be so foolish.

Brown [rolling up his sleeve.] Does that look like a slave's arm ! Is there a feature about me that resembles a slave !—No. But by your consumate perjury you have made me such. You have taken from me all that is dear on earth, or sacred in heaven. You have robbed me of all that makes life respected, or death lamented. You are the meanest reptile that crawls upon the face of the earth. You exact more homage from me than you are willing to accede to the laws of your country, or the God that made you. Ah ! Mr. Johnson, you shall be remembered as long in the annals of crime as you have lived beyond your deserts. Your life is characterized by infamy. Your death will be by the pangs of remorse. And the vermin will shrink from your loathsome carcase

in disgust, fearing that the banquet of your body would be followed with immediate and certain destruction to every hope. Leave me—I do not wish to look upon you. And when you leave this place, carry with you my bitter curse, for you have it in feeling if not in words.

John. Brown, you can talk, but it will do no good. My slave you are, and must be, till I see fit to dispose of you.

Brown. In name I am your slave. But, sir, before I will do the dirty office that commonly falls to the lot of the poor slave, I will by virtue of this good hand, cheat you of your sport. This, [taking a knife from his breast, and holding it up,] shall silence the conviction of shame, and prove my God. Don't quail, I will not injure you. No—I am proud to believe I have here within this honest breast, a small spark of the man left, and rather than sacrifice that upon the altar of shame, to satisfy a revenge honestly entertained towards you, I would stand a sentinel at the gate of hell, and live upon the slender bounty of its monarch. No, Johnson, do me any injury, but charge me not with a desire to rob you of your heart's idol, and I will bare it without a murmur. Now, leave me, I charge you, and never enter this prison again until you come prepared to advocate the claims of truth, and bow your guilty head at the altar of your country's justice. Johnson, leave me, and return no more.

John. Brown, all I ask is for you to say

that I am your master, and you may come out.

BROWN. When I own you as my master, the Mississippi shall run blood. I would as soon filch from the coon his parent vice, descend to play the jewsharp for the monkey to dance after by moonlight, or take lessons to be the mimic of a dog, as to own such a thing as you are for my master. I fear I cannot fill the office to your liking.

JOHN. I came here for the purpose of talking to you upon this subject, but I find that you are as hard as ever. I had thought if you would own me, that I would take you out, and do well by you. But I see you are determined to make a fool of yourself, so good bye. [going] I shall sell you as soon as possible. [Exit Johnson and Woodfork.]

BROWN. Go ahead, you old fool, and don't show your face again. [The slave whipped by the jailor is about dying. Brown looks at him and weeps.] Philip, will not the almighty soon visit upon this city the curse of Sodom. How can men that profess to enjoy the benefit of a conscience, look upon such a deed as that, [pointing to the man who has fallen over,] and reconcile it with their daily professions.

PHILIP. Let us bare it all my friend Brown, without a murmur. We can't avoid it. We are among the unbelieving Jews, and like our Saviour, we must suffer martyrdom.

BROWN. Philip, I had a dream last night—

I dreamed I was always to be retained a slave. If I attempted to escape I should be taken. It seemed as though my better angel said to me, Brown, you are in the hands of a merciless foe. Put an end to your existence, and you will avoid much suffering. They shall atone for the crime. I will be your counsellor when you shall offer yourself for examination at the bar of heaven. Philip, I am half resolved to do the deed. [Gets up and walks the prison in the dark.]

PHILIP. No, Brown, if that must be done, let it be by some other hand than your own.

BROWN. Will you do it, my friend?

PHILIP. No, never. It would be a canker preying upon my soul, to the latest moment of my existence.

BROWN [walking the prison.] What have I to live for. The world hates me. I am a scourge to my race, and a curse to myself. Oh! God! that I had been born a dog, to feed upon the scraps of a miser's kitchen, or live upon the slender bounty of an Indian's wish. Philip, this knife, [taking the knife from his breast,] that cost me my only coat to procure, shall prove my liberator. I know no law recorded of God, that requires me to live a slave, —the laws of man I despise.

PHILIP. Brown, consider what you are about to do.

BROWN. I have considered too long already. My mind misgives.

PHILIP. But wait till your passion subsides.

BROWN. No, I hold the pledge of my liberty in my hand. When this heat subsides, it may be missing, or my power to use it, gone. Now is my time. [Raises the knife.] Let me not witness the deed that sends my soul into the dark regions of futurity,—but stop, [drops his hand,] shall I commence that journey without commending my soul to my maker? No—[falls upon his knees]. Great Father! I am about to change my place of abode. I have yet to commit one offence against the laws of man,—I have committed but few against the laws of heaven. From my earliest recollections in childhood, I have been the victim of prejudice, ridicule, and the bitterest enmity. I am now upon the brink of perdition, without a hope to be remembered in after time. I have lived till life has become wearisome. Death is a pleasing anticipation. I ask it as a last and only favour. I ask thy blessing to rest upon me. [As he attempts to rise, he discovers the ring of his betrothed.] Ah! I had forgotten that this was upon my finger. It was the first gift of her, above all others, except my maker, I adore. [Kisses it.] Sweet angel of my fondest hopes, why did I forget you? I could have died without a tear, [weeps,] had I not recognized this early, this cherished token of your affection. When I received this ring I gave a pledge to wed within sixteen days from this time! wretched that I am, can I hope to fulfil that pledge!

Alas! no!—But may I not at some future day? A ray of light beams in upon my soul, and forebodes a happy future! Shall I not live to see once more my Harriet—my betrothed! In that bright thought, I live! Away! foul usurper of that happy dream! [throws away the knife.] If not for myself, I live pledged to another. I will not gratify your life-destroying gift. [Looking at the knife.] I am free!—I will remain so! Philip, I am a man again. I was about to take my life,—but that dear boon,—still dearer is the giver—has saved me from a bloody grave.

PHILIP. Ever preserve it, Brown, as a memorial of respect.

BROWN. I shall—and look upon it with my warmest confidence. [Rap on the jail door. Enter a servant with a note from Mr. Johnson.]

SERV. Here is a note from Mr. Johnson.

JAILOR [reads.] "You will please deliver to the bearer my slave, Brown, and oblige yours, &c. GEORGE JOHNSON.

JAILOR. Brown—Brown.

BROWN. Well, sir, what is your will?

JAILOR. Fix yourself up a little, you are going out among the citizens.

BROWN. Yes, I will do that. [Brushes up his hair, and borrows an old coat from Philip.] Well, I am ready.

JAILOR. Brown, take care of yourself.

BROWN. Oh, yes! I will always do that. Good bye, old fellow. [Exit.

JAILOR. Good bye, Brown.

SCENE IV.—A Street in Buffalo. Enter Brown, and meets four or five of his old friends.

BROWN. Halloo, Charley, how are you?

CHARLEY. How are you, Brown? I heard the other day that you was taken up in New-Orleans, and put in jail.

BROWN. Yes, Charley, they nabbed me as soon as I landed on shore. [Enter Jake, John, and Dick.]

JAKE. Halloo, Brown, is that you?

BROWN. How do you do, Jake?

JOHN. How do you do, Brown?

DICK. Give us your hand, Brown.

BROWN. How are you, boys? I am glad to see you.

JOHN. How long have you been in town, Brown?

BROWN. Just arrived. Haven't been in town more than two hours.

JAKE. How did you make your escape?

BROWN. By the use of these stampers. [Shaking his feet.]

CHARLEY. I say, Brown, let us know how you made your escape.

BROWN. Well, listen. When I arrived in New-Orleans I was apprehended as a slave, thrown into the calaboose, and kept there a few hours, when I was taken before the Mayor. Three men swore that I was the slave of Johnson. I denied it, but to no effect. I was declared a slave, and taken back to jail. I laid there a few days, when I was taken out and

put upon an auction stand to be sold. I told the bidders that I was no slave, and if they bought me I would run away from them. No man would bid, and I was sent back to jail again. I served snother term there, and was then taken out by a Mr. Weed, who purchased me of my master. He was a very frank, generous, good-hearted man, and allowed me to go anywhere in the city I pleased. After I had been with him about two weeks, being upon the Levee one day, I secured a passport, and left the next morning for New-York. I arrived there in due time. From thence I came direct to this place. You have, now, gentlemen, a brief history of my life for the last five months.

CHARLEY. Why, Brown, I should have supposed he would have watched you pretty close.

BROWN. I said to him one day in a joking way, Massa, are you not afraid I will give you the slip, some day? O, no, says he, I never had a slave leave me. They all like me too well.

DICK. Well, now boys, we must get up a good party for Brown.

CHARLEY. So we will. Give him a good benefit. Let us go right at it, and have it come off this evening. What do you say, John?

JOHN. I am agreed. What do you say, Jake?

JAKE. O, yes, yes, certainly. I am always ready for a dance.

CHARLEY. Jake, you and John go up street, and give them notice, and Dick, myself and Brown will stir them up about the dock.

JOHN. Do your best, Charley.

CHARLEY. I will be with them. [They separate, and start in different directions.]

SCENE LAST.—The whole stage thrown open for a dance. Enter about twenty couple for a dance, they take partners, music strikes up, and they commence dancing. Enter Brown. After the dance Brown comes forward.

BROWN. My friends, I am once more a member of your happy circle. And I cannot adequately express the joy I feel, when I think of my escape from that wicked city—that modern Sodom,—and my arrival again among you. I can only say that you have my warmest thanks for the cordiality with which you have characterized my reception. And to the friends who have been witness of our joyful meeting, I would say in behalf of myself and friends, that we appreciate your kindness, and shall endeavour to merit each and every act of your favour. As I am about to bid you good night, I can only wish that when you reflect that the scenes you have witnessed this evening, are but the shadows of facts, and may perhaps have some sympathy with abolitionism, you will also remember that the circumstances connected with this history would admit of no other arrangement. We will now say to you in the language of a song prepared for the occasion, good night. [A song by the whole company, entitled Brown's Return. After which the curtain falls.

AXB 200
DATE DUE
MAY 7 - 1977
MAY 1977
MAY 11 1977
DEMCO NO. 32-